

## CLAIMS

*sub a1* > 1. A method for providing discount incentives to potential customers for making purchases from service or goods providers; the method comprising the steps of:

providing an internet website for providers to register and to set their respective discount parameters for issuing discount coupons to potential customers;

5 permitting access to said website by said potential customers to register and search for registered providers from whom they wish to make purchases;

establishing customer purchasing parameters for a selected provider and indicating a match between discount parameters and purchasing parameters; and

presenting a website display of a discount coupon corresponding to said

10 matching parameters for printout by a registered customer for subsequent redemption at a provider's place of business.

2. The method recited in claim 1 wherein said matching parameters comprise an amount to be spent by the customer and a specified period of time in which said amount must be spent.

3. The method recited in claim 1 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected provider and adding said map to said website display.

4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said provider.

5. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

6. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a postponed customer to search for a provider based upon selected criteria.

7. The method recited in claim 6 wherein said search criteria comprise at least one criterion taken from the group consisting of location, nature of products offered, nature of services offered and timing of provider registration at said website.

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8. A method of issuing electronically-generated merchant-specific discount coupons to consumers over an internet communications link; the method comprising the steps of:

establishing an internet website on said link, said website having a selected

5 address;

providing at least one website page for merchants to register and to set their respective discount parameters for said discount coupons;

providing at least one website page for consumers to register and search for registered merchants based upon selected search criteria;

providing at least one website page for consumers to indicate their desired purchase parameters;

comparing discount parameters of a merchant with purchase parameters of a consumer and indicating when a match of discount parameters and purchase parameters occurs;

presenting a website page having an electronic discount coupon representing the matching parameters for a particular merchant; and

permitting a consumer to print the presented page for subsequent redemption of the discount coupon represented at said presented website page.

9. The method recited in claim 8 wherein said matching parameters comprise an amount to be spent by the consumer and a specified period of time in which said amount must be spent.

10. The method recited in claim 8 wherein said presenting step further comprises the steps of generating a map indicating the location of a selected merchant and adding said map to said website display.

11. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of establishing a data file of coupon generation for each said merchant.

12. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of including at least one verification number on each said discount coupon.

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13. The method recited in claim 8 further comprising the step of displaying a search page at said website for permitting a postponed consumer to search for a merchant based upon selected criteria.

14. The method recited in claim 13 wherein said search criteria comprise at least one criterion taken from the group consisting of location, nature of products offered, nature of services offered and timing of merchant registration at said website.

*Allen B. Z.*